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REDESIGNED ADULT LEARNING TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF DEEP
UNDERSTANDING OF THE DANIELSON FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND
THE SHIFTS REQUIRED TO LEAD STUDENTS TO EXCELLENCE

Caletha H. White

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National-Louis University

December, 2017

A THREE-PART DISSERTATION

EXPLORING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AS MEASURED BY THE DANIELSON
FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES:
PURSUING AN UNDERSTANDING OF LEADING
STUDENTS TO EXCELLENCE
P.U.L.S.E. STUDY

REDESIGNED ADULT LEARNING TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF DEEP
UNDERSTANDING OF THE DANIELSON FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND
THE SHIFTS REQUIRED TO LEAD STUDENTS TO EXCELLENCE


POLICY ADVOCACY – ADVOCATING FOR REDESIGNED ADULT LEARNING
IN SUPPORT OF VALUE ADDED TEACHER EVALUATION

Caletha H. White

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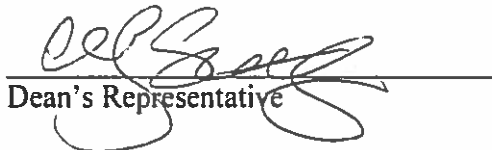
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This document was created as *one* part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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ABSTRACT

Using Wagner's (2006) change leadership model to assess culture, context, condition and competencies of a small suburban school district to create a change plan for value-added teacher evaluation is the central idea to this study. The four arenas of change together allow for a systematic analysis of teaching and learning. This research study represents the current state of the school district with gaps in the connectedness of opportunities for building competency toward enhancing teacher quality as measured by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and value added NWEA MAP achievement outcomes. Ninety-six percent of the teachers are rated effective while 79% of the learners are meeting student growth proficiency gains. Strategies for creating a vision of success involves developing a plan to transform the district and move through change efforts toward the goal of a future reality where a sustainable and connected relationship exists between teacher quality ratings and student achievement outcomes. The reflections, planning, action steps, and activities that occur between the current and future state of the district is the work that provides a foundation for progress and change.

PREFACE

As the Director of Instructional Services in the school district my work is centered around improving the instructional practice of our educators in order to sustain and improve student achievement. This work is done in a myriad of ways; curriculum monitoring, assessment of effective practices through data analysis and collaborative strategy conversations related to best practice instruction. My passion lies within the adult learning that is inter-related and robust allowing teachers to recognize the strength of their voice in the classroom. Through this study I have learned how identifying problems in our practice and working toward common instructional outcomes supports effective school reform. Through professional learning activities which offer a menu of options, support teacher autonomy, incorporate reflective strategies and immediately connect to classroom practice I envision all classrooms as windows to the world for students to embrace the possibilities of their own and for teachers to understand what leads to excellence in the classroom.

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Teacher evaluation is a process used in schools everywhere as a means for communicating teacher effectiveness. Many states have enacted legislation that mandates school districts to implement teacher evaluation reform. In Illinois, the adoption of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) of 2010, or Public Act 96-0861, modified as Senate Bill 7 required new evaluation models and the inclusion of “data and indicators of student growth as a significant factor” (Illinois General Assembly SB0315, 2010, p. 12). With this new PERA legislation, Illinois school districts were required to begin to form joint committees for the purposes of creating guiding documents for teacher evaluation reform. According to Public Act 97-008 of 2011, the law requires that the joint committee include an equal number of members selected by the union and the board of education. The guiding teacher evaluation documents created by the joint committee were required to integrate professional practice and student growth.

The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a model of choice for teacher evaluation with a minimum 30% percent of a teacher’s rating being student growth and 70% of a teacher’s rating being professional practice inclusive of planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities (ISBE, 2011). Teacher evaluation ratings inclusive of student growth and professional practice as determined by the state of Illinois PERA are excellent, proficient, needs improvement and unsatisfactory.

According to the PERA legislation (Illinois General Assembly SB0315, 2010), beginning in September, 2012, Illinois districts having 500,000 or more inhabitants were

required to implement new teacher evaluation processes in at least 300 schools and the remaining schools by September, 2013. Implementation was required by September 1, 2015, for school districts in the lowest 20% as measured by No Child Left Behind adequate yearly progress on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test. For all other school districts in Illinois, implementation was required by September 1, 2016. During the 2014-15 school year, the 2010 PERA was required to be implemented in a small school district in the south suburbs of Chicago as a result of state legislation. As the joint committee of five administrators and five union-selected employees began their planning in the spring of 2015, outlines were developed to include the following core components in their discussion: professional practice formal/informal observations and student growth assessments, measures and guidelines. Full implementation of the new teacher evaluation model was required by September 1, 2015.

My program evaluation, *Pursuing an Understanding of Leading Students to Excellence*, provides a framework for this change plan (White, 2016). Through the program evaluation process, I studied the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement outcomes in a small school district (the District) in the southern suburbs of Chicago, Illinois, during the first year of the PERA implementation. The outcomes of the program evaluation suggested that the District has a large number of proficient teachers; however, the students perform at a lower percentage as it relates to Northwest Education Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) reading and mathematics and all other assessments used to measure student growth. Specifically, 96% of the teachers were rated as excellent or proficient while only 79% of the learners are meeting student growth proficiency gains. When considering NWEA MAP as the sole

measure of teacher quality as it relates to student achievement, 94% of the teachers using NWEA MAP as their student growth assessment are rated excellent or proficient while only 61% of the learners are meeting NWEA MAP student growth proficiency gains. The concluding question being, Is the current teacher evaluation plan an effective measure of teacher quality if a gap in student achievement and teacher quality rating is present? This question led to the change plan to refocus adult learning as it relates to teacher quality and student achievement outcomes.

Tucker and Stronge (2005) “substantiate that a whole range of personal and professional qualities are associated with higher levels of student achievement” (p. 2). The purpose of this change plan is to develop a professional learning blueprint that will positively impact professional qualities and serve to provide a deep understanding of the district’s adopted teacher evaluation model, the Danielson Framework for Teaching (the Framework) in order to improve the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement. According to Danielson (2015), the Framework serves as a tool for common language and shared understanding of what constitutes good teaching. The District program evaluation outcomes demonstrate that the teacher quality ratings are represented by a higher percentage at excellent or proficient than the student growth outcomes.

It is my belief that when teachers and principals have the opportunity to study the Framework, which provides a clear and explicit focus on specific teacher behaviors organized through four domains of teaching responsibility, 22 components and 76 elements along with the NWEA MAP student proficiency outcomes as related to the NWEA learning continuum, the district will see an improvement in student achievement.

It is also my belief that along with the improvement in student achievement, the District will see a greater relationship between effective teaching and student outcomes.

Additionally, the common language of the Framework and the shared understanding support the shifts required for 21st century learning, which will positively impact student achievement across the domains of learning.

Rationale

The change plan highlights the implications for improved teaching and learning in order to provide a context for feedback that is meaningful to teachers in fulfilling their purpose – to educate students. Over the years, research has suggested that educators want to understand what makes students successful. Tucker and Stronge (2005), through their work on teacher quality, “support the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement” (p. 2).

According to Hanushek (2014), a substantial number of studies indicate a clear difference in teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. For example, “In one study teachers near the top of the quality distribution got an entire year’s worth of additional learning out of their students compared to those near the bottom” (Hanushek, 2014, p. 24). There is clear evidence that a teacher’s ability and effectiveness are the most influential determinants in student achievement. According to the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, “the data does show that we can identify teachers that are more effective in helping students learn” (Cantrell & Kane, 2013, p. 5). The MET project outcomes also suggest that more effective teachers are associated with better performing students.

How, then, do we raise teacher awareness and increase the teacher's ability and effectiveness in order to improve student performance? The research summarized by Weisburg, Sexton, Mulhern and Keeling (2009) suggested that evaluation systems have failed to provide critical information related to a teacher's instructional performance, thus creating the Widget Effect. The rationale for the change plan is my belief that the Widget Effect of 2009 can be reversed. The summary suggests that we fail to distinguish great teaching from poor teaching, creating an educational nation at risk. Weisburg et al. (2009) stated, "A teacher's effectiveness – the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement – is not measured, recorded, or used to inform decision making in any meaningful way" (p. 3). The change plan will focus on utilizing teacher evaluation ratings as a meaningful springboard for developing professional learning groups to study the behaviors described in the domains of the Framework. Danielson (2007) suggested that her research and studies related to teacher behaviors promote improved student learning, thus reversing the Widget Effect.

It is critical that we ensure that teachers and instructional leaders deeply understand how to plan and prepare for instruction, develop effective classroom environments, and utilize effective instructional strategies. The New Illinois Learning Standards, based on the Common Core, require teachers to shift their instructional practices from traditional "sit and get" teaching to more engaged, rigorous real world learning. Accompanying that challenge is to engage students in the learning process as active producers of their own learning through collaboration, active learning, and critical thinking. According to Danielson (2013), the 2013 edition of the Framework was released in response to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) adoption and

implementation to suggest instructional alignments more closely matched to the engagement and conceptual understanding of the CCSS. Wagner (2014) suggested that learning in the 21st century requires students to “think, reason, analyze, weigh evidence, problem solve and communicate effectively” (p. xxiii). The change plan will allow the educators in the District to understand the critical attributes of the Framework as a means to improving practice ultimately improving student learning. By understanding what excellent teachers do, according to the Framework, the change plan will identify actions to impact teacher quality positively.

The quality of teaching and learning in the District is important for all stakeholders, as a critical need has been identified in the number of students that meet the learning standards as measured by high stakes state testing. According to the 2014-15 Illinois Interactive Report Card in the spring of 2015, 27% of all students assessed in grades three through eight met or exceeded state standards in English language arts as measured by the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessment. Additionally, 11% of all students assessed in grades three through eight met or exceeded state standards in Mathematics as measured by the PARCC Assessment, compared to 28% of all students meeting or exceeding standards in the State of Illinois as shown in Table 1.

Local testing outcomes in the spring of 2015 utilizing the Northwest Education Assessment Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) present areas of critical need demonstrated by measurement of proficiency in reading and mathematics Rausch Instructional Units (RIT) scores. The NWEA RIT Proficiency Summary in reading identifies 50.8% of students performing below grade level and the NWEA RIT

Proficiency Summary in mathematics identifies 52% of students performing below grade level.

Table 1
Spring 2015 PARCC Assessment Scores

	Did Not Meet Standards	Partially Met Standards	Approached Standards	Met Standards	Exceeded Standards
District	23 %	33%	26%	17%	1%
Composite					
State	14%	24%	28%	29%	4%
Composite					
English	17%	26%	30%	25%	2%
Language					
Arts					
State ELA	14%	20%	28%	32%	6%
Mathematics	29%	40%	21%	10%	1%
State					
Mathematics	15%	28%	29%	25%	3%

As shown in Table 1, 27% of the District's students are meeting or exceeding standards in English language arts, compared to 38% of the students in the state meeting or exceeding standards. Table 11 also shows 11% of district students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics compared to 28% of students in the state of Illinois.

Goals

The goal of the change plan is to use the Framework as a tool to identify and study the themes that emerge regarding teacher actions and student learning. I aim to analyze deeply what the teacher does, says and provides for students to move them toward excellence as 21st century learners specifically as it relates to student achievement as measured by NWEA MAP. The change plan will deepen the study of moving students toward excellence on high stakes local and state assessments to address the areas of

critical need in student performance along with an increase in the number of teachers rated excellent. The explicit goals for improving practice and performance are:

1. Studying the Framework to understand what teacher actions and effective strategies lead students to excellence
2. Promoting an understanding of the Framework's four domains, 22 components and 76 elements and the shifts required to impact the implementation of domain indicators and critical attributes required for excellent teaching
3. Promoting reflection and dialogue among teachers leading to an understanding of their individual and collective classroom practices and PARCC and NWEA MAP student achievement outcomes
4. Increasing principal collaboration regarding effective instructional leadership paradigms and actions for professional learning

Demographics

The change plan will support a small school district located in the southern suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. According to the most recent Illinois Interactive Report Card, the District student enrollment is 1,977 students with 127 full-time teachers. The student mobility rate is 26%, and 86% of the students are identified as low-income. The District serves 83% Black students, 8% Hispanic and 6% two or more races. The District allocates \$6,126 instructional spending per student. The District demographics are based on five schools, including three primary centers servicing students in grades Kindergarten through three and two elementary schools servicing students in grades four through eight. The student achievement scores for students in grades three through eight are measured by the PARCC Assessment. The student proficiency summary report for students in

grades two through eight are measured by the NWEA RIT score and shown in Table 2.

Table 2 demonstrates 33.8% of students meeting reading benchmarks and 27.7% meeting mathematics benchmarks.

Table 2
Spring 2015 NWEA MAP Proficiency Summary

	Academic Warning	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Reading	15.5 %	50.8%	27.7%	6.1%
Mathematics	20.2%	52%	25.1%	2.6%

SECTION TWO: ASSESSING THE 4 C'S (AS-IS)

Arenas of Change

Wagner et al. (2006) suggested that we closely analyze the four c's – context, culture, conditions, and competencies as we consider goals for shifting the organization toward the desired teaching and learning environment. Developing a specific systems analysis of each of the four c's with a lens describing the current status and the desired status provides an “as is” picture of the organization and a “to be” (Figure 4) state that we desire to achieve. Along with strategies and actions that were critical in moving from the current to the projected environment, we created a framework for change to examine throughout our ongoing work. Using As – Is and To – Be diagnostic tools to look at systems and think about organizational change provides a context for thinking, reflecting, planning and developing representations and incentives for systems reconfiguration.

While Knoster (1991) suggested that schools are a complex organism with varied components that need to be addressed for successful implementation, we know the multiple models support transitional frameworks that work in schools. Knoster's (1991) Leading and Managing Change model allows change agents to manage the change process through ongoing assessments of conditions and climates to minimize systematic failure and increase the potential of full implementation. Knoster (1991) further suggested that the critical components are vision, consensus, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan in the change model.

Diagnosing the current dynamics of the District to determine what is currently occurring in classrooms, what is the focus during teacher evaluation conferences, when does instructional reflection occur and which adult learning activities are critical to the

change process will guide the change plan. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) provided a roadmap of sorts to guide our first critical steps of diagnosing the system. Heifetz et al. (2009) suggested that “the practice of leadership, like the practice of medicine, involves two core processes: diagnosis first and then action” (p. 6). Heifetz’s et al. (2009) process suggests a close study of:

The what: data analysis, identification of the problem,

The why: analysis and interpretations of why the problem is occurring

The what next: potential action approaches and intervention.

The roadmap for analysis, deep study, and planning for improvement in adult learning is central to creating a common understanding of instructional practices that will positively impact teaching and learning.

Considering the Danielson Framework for Teaching, student growth measures and the absence or presence of a relationship between the two is critical in determining the effectiveness of the work in our classrooms with teachers and students. According to White (2016), a strong relationship does not exist between teacher rating and student growth. However, the question remains, How do we change the culture of teaching and learning to shift and sustain the teacher’s work with students and the achievement outcome of students in an ongoing, incremental positive direction? This change plan would suggest that an analysis of the context, culture, conditions, and competencies of the school district will promote a clearer understanding of how to create an environment of sustainability and improvement through refocused adult learning experiences. The diagnosis of the adult learning systems in place within the school district provides a starting point for understanding.

Context

The district operates within a community of learners that are not currently meeting and/or exceeding academic benchmarks. According to the spring 2015 NWEA summary report, 66.3% of students in grades two through eight are performing below expectations in reading, and 70.2% of students in grades two through eight are performing below expectation in mathematics. Low achievement in reading and math indicate that there is a high achievement gap between the local and state outcomes. Additionally, 27% of students are meeting or exceeding English language arts expectations, and 11% of students are meeting or exceeding mathematics expectations on the state mandated PARCC assessment.

The district also serves 90% minority students, with 86% of the students being identified as low income based on free and reduced-price lunch status. The current context demonstrates the need for an understanding of which, if any, specific strategies are important for developing a plan for the work needed with the families and communities served by the District.

Working with various stakeholders and systems within the District currently occurs with little differentiation among the constituents. The District goals, vision, mission and purpose are overarching among all of the schools. The school improvement agenda, professional learning plan and data collection plans are created on a district-level basis. Little autonomy is given to school-level leaders to study the needs of their staff and students and plan professional growth supports for the individual learning teams.

Culture

Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, Helsing, and Rasmussen (2006), defined culture as “the shared values of beliefs and behaviors related to teaching and learning, instructional leadership and the relationships that occur in schools” (p. 102). The District’s mission is to meet the needs of diverse learners and to promote high educational standards by differentiating instruction, nurturing strategic and higher-level thinking and inspiring a love of lifelong learning. Clearly, the District has a mission to create a culture for learning within the classroom environment.

The District is committed to implementing the mission of engaging students in learning through nurturing and differentiation. According to Danielson (2013), engaging students in learning is the heart of the Framework for Teaching and requires teachers to promote problem solving through well-designed learning tasks. The average teacher score for Danielson Framework for Teaching Component 3c: Engaging Student in Learning is 2.96/4.00. Of the 22 domains on the district Teachscape Score Tree Map (Appendix A) this represents one of the five lowest averages in ratings.

During the 2015-16 school year, the first year of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the District did not offer additional adult learning activities to deepen understanding of the critical attributes associated with the domain components. The District staff continued to operate through the belief systems in place. Along with continuing the current beliefs and expectations, the District focused on implementation of new initiatives in reading, mathematics, character education, writing and assessment. Staff also focused on working toward a deep understanding of the critical attributes of the Framework for Teaching. There is a sense of urgency to implement all initiatives across

the spectrum; however, a deep understanding of the Framework for Teaching is critical as we consider the new legislative requirements. Selecting the Framework as the new evaluation tool and connecting teacher evaluation and student growth has created a new sense of urgency in the evaluation arena.

Conditions

The District's structure of leadership includes a management of the conditions for learning. The District has various types of instruction occurring in the classroom. According to Danielson (2013), domain three suggests that teachers that are highly effective allow students an opportunity to take initiative for learning to make it more meaningful for them. While some classrooms have many student-initiated contributions that frame the learning environment, some do not.

Another condition for learning that currently impedes instructional progress is the interruption of the learning environment due to the concept design of two of the District's concept schools. The District currently has one fourth through eighth grade Leadership and STEM School and one Technology and Performing Arts school. During the opening year of the concept schools, each of the schools experienced growth in average daily attendance, which reflected 99% average over the course of the nine-month school year in comparison of a 94% average in the prior year. With the concept focus, students participate in field trips and school programs. To allow for these opportunities, students may be pulled from core reading and math instruction to participate in the concept-based activities. The scheduling of the concept schools presents a challenging condition for learning. Ultimately, working toward effective scheduling which limits the impact on

core subjects may support effective improvement efforts across the continuum of the school year.

Along with the scheduling challenge the District continues to focus on professional learning to support more frequent and consistent instructional walkthroughs and peer learning. According to Marshall (2012), one of the ways to improve the teacher assessment process is to change the structure, beginning with the number of visits to the classroom, to more frequent, unannounced, short observations instead of one or two scheduled observations. The District administrators have adhered to the required observation schedule, which includes one formal observation and two informal observations for staff with five or more years of service or three formal observations and two informal observations for staff with one to four years of service.

Competencies

The classroom teacher impacts student achievement in various ways. What the teacher says and does contributes to student learning and their growth along the educational continuum. Danielson (2007) suggested that the teachers' opportunity to understand the common language of their practice and to engage in reflective dialogue with practitioners is critical to increasing their competencies. Teacher and administrator competencies as related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching promote an environment that supports teaching and learning in a common way through a common language.

The organization as a set of structures and systems in and of itself cannot create change. The people within the organization must work toward a common set of goals through adult learning experiences to create change. Wagner et al. (2006) "defines

competencies as the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning” (p. 99). The current state of the school district includes practitioners (teachers) and evaluators (principals and administrators) that have participated in various professional learning activities to build competency.

In anticipation of the 2015 implementation of the Illinois Performance Reform Act required activities, the staff in the district began to prepare. The superintendent of schools made great strides to build background knowledge for staff and provide opportunities for staff to gain knowledge about the Performance Evaluation Reform Act and the Danielson Framework for Teaching teacher evaluation system through the following measures:

- In July of 2012, all District administrators attended an Illinois Administrator Academy workshop: “Race To The Top: PERA, The Education Reform Bill and Related Initiatives.”
- In the Spring of 2013, all evaluators were required to complete on line Teachscape Evaluator Training Modules and pass the Evaluator Proficiency Test to demonstrate proficiency in understanding the new classroom observation framework and in collecting evidence in the classroom related to teacher practice for evaluation purposes.
- In September, 2014, all District staff participated in an in-district Teacher Institute day hosted by the Consortium for Educational Change focused on the Danielson Framework for Teaching four domains.

- In September, 2014, all building principals began to communicate the critical attributes of the Framework to their staff on a weekly basis for professional learning focus in each school.
- In the Spring of 2015, the District Joint Committee met to develop the District plan. The Joint Committee meetings were facilitated by staff at the local Regional Office of Education.
- In May, 2015, a team of district administrators, building principals, and teacher evaluation committee members attended a series of workshops hosted by the Consortium for Educational Change focused on the development of Student Learning Objectives as an option for a student growth model.
- In September, 2015, all practitioners and evaluators participated in a two-and-a-half-hour, in-district Institute Day facilitated by Teachscape to inform staff on the use of the online Teachscape Reflect platform for teacher evaluation.

In August, 2015, the district was required to implement the new evaluation system. The staff has background knowledge of the new system based on the above meetings, workshops and adult learning activities along with the principal's providing comments related to Danielson Domain two, Classroom Environment, and Danielson Domain three, Instruction, in their weekly newsletters, staff meetings and professional learning community meetings with teachers. The new evaluation process based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching began.

Even with the adult learning activities offered by the district, the superintendent's desire to provide learning experiences and the building principals' weekly dialogue, the teachers and evaluators are continuing to grow in their understanding of the depth of the

domain components and elements. A process for inter-rater reliability to support sustaining common understanding and professional accountability for evaluators is also continuing to be developed.

In the spring of 2016, questions arose related to the new evaluation process and District Teacher Evaluation Plan student growth component in Appendix B. The list included such questions as:

- Why is there a five- point growth required on the writing rubric between pre- and posttests?
- Why did one principal perform observation one, and another performance observation two and/or three?
- Why did the rubric indicate that an excellent rating means we are having conferences with our students?
- What are the appropriate levels for the developmental reading assessment to indicate the students are meeting growth expectations?

During the spring, district administrators and principals revised evaluation documents to clarify scoring and understanding of the evaluation process. Several meetings were also held with the superintendent, district administrators and principals to continue discussions related to scoring, ratings, formal observations and informal observations. The organization and the people were still working toward building the competencies to shift to the new evaluation system with confidence and knowledge. Levels of frustration are significant during the transition to comply with new legislative requirements.

SECTION THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

There is a sense of urgency surrounding the clarity of how to improve student achievement through effective adult learning activities. The PARCC and NWEA MAP student achievement scores communicate to district stakeholders that our students are not performing at levels significant enough to meet state or local expectations. According to the 2014-15 Illinois Interactive Report Card in the spring of 2015 for third through eighth grade, 27% of all students assessed met or exceeded state standards in English language arts, and 11% of all students met or exceeded state standards in mathematics as measured by the PARCC assessment. Local NWEA MAP testing outcomes in the spring of 2015 RIT Proficiency Summary in reading identified 33.8% of students performing at grade level and in mathematics identified 27.7% of students performing at grade level.

The current context, culture, conditions and competencies of the school district demonstrate that there are gaps between teacher practice, student growth and professional learning activities. I collected data to gain a clear picture of the as-is conditions in the district to demonstrate the greatest areas of critical need. A specific focus on mathematics was central throughout the data collection as the state assessment data demonstrates that this is an area of critical need with 11% of the students meeting or exceeding expectations. The following quantitative and qualitative data were collected:

Competency analysis data: District Professional Development plan

District professional development meeting agendas

District professional development participation summary

School level teacher evaluation and student growth ratings

Conditions analysis data:	District summary of Framework component averages Informal observation frequency
Culture analysis data:	4 th -8 th grade mathematics schedules District Professional Development Plan District Goals Statement
Context analysis data:	Mathematics student achievement outcomes School Professional Learning Community meeting agendas Interviews with Superintendent and Principals

Participants

The key participants in evaluating the components for an effective change plan included the superintendent of schools, building principals and professional learning community leaders. The participants were members of the staff in the school district located in the southern suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. An electronic invitation was sent to invite administrators and teacher leaders to participate in refocusing adult learning research activities. I will also provide the perspective as the Director of Instructional Services of curriculum and instruction planning, professional learning activities and curriculum monitoring.

As an administrator in the district responsible for evaluating staff ethical consideration was important throughout the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis process. Participants were provided with a confidentiality statement through an informed consent process. Participants were assured that data collection will remain confidential and follow the guidelines established by the Institutional Research Review Board.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered through a mixed-method, empirical, multi-case approach. The mixed-methods approach included quantitative and qualitative methods. Document analysis, teacher quality ratings, observation frequency and summative assessment data were the primary sources. Professional learning community leaders and principals provided school documents from meetings and professional development activities. The Director of Technology provided student assessment data, observation data and teacher quality ratings. As the developer of the district professional development plan, I provided a significant amount of information related to current adult learning goals and plans, professional development participation summary, and the District's goals. PARCC and NWEA MAP quantitative data were collected for review and analysis in the area of mathematics. An analysis of the amount of time and frequency of adult learning related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching was critical to diagnosis and analysis of the current state (as-is) and the desired state (to-be). Additionally, an analysis of NWEA MAP data was conducted as it relates to the instructional practice in the classroom that supports the NWEA MAP Learning Continuum and the District adopted mathematics resources.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed to present a picture of the need for an increased focus on developing an understanding of the four domains and 22 components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the shifts required in classroom practices. Data were also analyzed to determine what the valid indicators of student success are in relationship to student growth and teacher quality. The purpose of the data analysis was to look for

themes related to improving teaching and learning through effective instructional strategies. According to Danielson (2013), the Framework for Teaching identifies those aspects of a teacher's responsibility that through empirical studies are documented as promoting student learning. All data were analyzed to determine the importance of the relationship between teacher practice and student performance when a greater focus on adult learning along the Danielson continuum is present.

Along with improving the competency through adult learning activities, the researcher also analyzed data focused on improving the learning context to close the achievement gap demonstrated through PARCC and NWEA MAP assessment outcomes. The analysis of the learning conditions to integrate more frequent walkthroughs, shifts in instructional practice and the analysis of the culture related to the expectations for learning was integral to the change process.

SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

To create a deeper understanding of the principles of change leadership, the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the effective use of data, and the shifts required in classrooms to create excellent learning environments, a body of literature was studied. The literature review was summarized through the lens of four major strands. The first strand of literature contained a review of the published work related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Framework itself as the central element of the District teacher evaluation system.

The second literature strand provided a lens for analysis of student growth data and an understanding of what the valid indicators of teacher performance are as we strive to meet the goal of improving student achievement. Various works in this strand provided insight into the legislative requirements to establish teacher evaluation plans inclusive of student growth components, assessment data uses and trends, and instructional practices that support shifts in instruction to reach student growth targets.

It was important to understand the specific literature that suggests that instructional practices, checking for understanding, collaborative conversations and reliable measures of teaching are an essential part of the teacher evaluation process. This third strand of literature contained a summary of the work in the education field that suggests student growth is related to teacher quality.

Finally, it is my belief that the literature presented throughout the study will support a need for change in the District to work more explicitly toward improving and sustaining student achievement through a systematic framework of practices adopted

throughout the school system. Because of this, the following literature review includes philosophy, strategy and required actions to lead change in the District and promote a culture of school reform through explicit school improvement plans.

A Conversation about the Framework

Charlotte Danielson (1996) first published *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (The Framework) in 1996. Since that time, the Framework has been edited and released again in 2007, 2011 and 2013. Each subsequent edition has been enhanced by educational research, additional tools and rubrics. According to Danielson (2013), the 2013 edition was released in response to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) adoption and implementation to suggest instructional alignments more closely matched to the engagement and conceptual understanding of the CCSS. The 2011 edition was released after being selected as one of the models to be used in a research study for the purpose of rating teacher lessons and evaluating their quality. The 2011 edition, developed as a result of the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation embarking on a large research project in 2000, stated that the:

Measure of Effective Teaching (MET Study), which entailed the video capture of over 23,000 lessons, analyzed according to five observation protocols, with the results of those analyses (together with other measures) correlated to value-added measures of student learning. The aim of the study was to determine which aspects of a teacher's practice were most highly correlated with high levels of student progress. (Danielson, 2013, p. 2)

By understanding what distinguished teachers do and by improving the ways teachers gain insight into their practice, we can help more teachers develop their own practice and achieve success for their students.

The Danielson Framework for Teaching provides an organized set of structures that focus on teacher behaviors organized through four domains of teaching responsibility, 22 components and 76 elements. The four domains of teaching are Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction and Professional Responsibilities. Additionally, according to Danielson (2015), the Framework for Teaching embeds a tool for common language and shared understanding of what constitutes good teaching. Since 1996, the Framework for Teaching has provided a context for conversations around the complex concepts of teaching and learning through a systematic approach.

The District's Joint Committee created a teacher evaluation plan (Appendix B) which, in accordance with the State of Illinois, identified the Framework as the tool for formal observation of teachers and examining professional practice. According to Danielson (2013), the Framework is centered around student engagement, hands-on and minds-on learning activities and students as a community of learners invested in and taking responsibility for their own learning.

Danielson (2015) also suggested that it is important for educators to have a shared understanding of what constitutes good teaching. This would support my change plan recommendations to refocus the adult learning experiences in the District by providing opportunities for study of the Components of the Framework for Teaching Domain 2-Classroom Environment and Domain 3-Instruction. Observers of classrooms, according

to Danielson (2016), can be attentive to student engagement and the intellectual activity of the classroom as we seek to understand the extent of learning taking place. The work of the classroom and the practice of teaching are seen through Domain 2 and Domain 3. Thus, if we can refocus our attention as teachers and observers on the design of lessons, the activity and engagement of the learner and the interactions occurring in the classroom, we can improve teacher quality and student achievement.

Teaching and Learning

When considering teacher quality as measured by the Framework and student achievement in the classroom we look at the work that occurs in the classroom as it relates to student learning. According to Danielson (2007), four categories of teacher quality are evident: distinguished, proficient, basic and unsatisfactory. The District-created teacher evaluation plan aligned with the State of Illinois identifies those quality ratings as excellent, proficient, needs improvement and unsatisfactory. The focus of my program evaluation was to pursue an understanding of leading students to excellence. To take the P.U.L.S.E. in the classroom to determine what teachers are saying and doing to promote students' exceling in academics. Enhancing our knowledge of the teacher behavior and language in the classroom enhances our understanding. Lack of explicit knowledge becomes a problem of practice. In other words, not being able to specifically identify those actions that lead students to excellence has a high impact on what happens in schools.

According to Childress and Marietta (2008), we are motivated to achieve excellence in the classroom through the problem-solving approach to designing and

implementing a strategy to improve performance. This work of the Public Education Leadership Project at Harvard University (PELP) provides a model of coherence to support improving the classroom environment through the problem-solving lens. By identifying the problem of practice as the work in the classroom, we look at the idea of the instructional core as central to school improvement. Childress (2008) suggested that what happens in classrooms around learning is the high impact problem. Childress (2008) further suggested that the problems we identify link directly to the instructional core, and the individuals charged to define the problem have authority that directly ties to the problem. As I considered this work of change in the educational environment, there is clear evidence illustrating the importance of the problem; the problem is manageable, measurable and time bound.

According to Childress, Elmore, Grossman and King (2011), connecting the instructional core with a district-wide strategy for improvement assists with coherence within the district to improve teaching and learning. Childress et al. (2011) suggested, the PELP Coherence Framework is designed to help district leaders identify the key elements that support a district-wide improvement strategy, bring those elements into a coherent relationship with the strategy and each other, and guide the actions of people throughout the district in the pursuit of high level achievement for all students.” (p. 1)

The PELP Coherence Framework is centered around the instructional core. Childress et al. (2011) suggested that the core consists of three interdependent components: the teacher, the student and the content. What the district believes about the

relationship between these three critical components is central to creating and implementing a coherent and effective change plan.

The PELP Coherence Framework assists with achieving coherence by:

1. Connecting the instructional core with a district-wide strategy for improvement
2. Highlighting district elements that can support or hinder effective implementation
3. Identifying interdependencies among district elements
4. Recognizing forces in the environment that have an impact on the implementation of strategy

The current state of the district is shifting in its understanding of the new requirements of the current teacher evaluation models. The relationship between the evaluation ratings and student achievement has created an environment of reflection, questioning and deep analysis of shifts and change. The high teacher quality ratings of 96% of the teachers rated as excellent or proficient while only 79% of the learners are meeting student growth proficiency gains is central to this change plan. Another tier of problem solving emerges when considering NWEA MAP as the sole measure of teacher quality. As it relates to student achievement, 94% of the teachers using NWEA MAP as their student growth assessment are rated excellent or proficient while only 61% of the learners are meeting NWEA MAP student growth proficiency gains. An additional tier of evidence presents itself in the teacher quality ratings. These ratings show that 96% of the teachers are rated proficient or excellent, and the PARCC assessment scores result in

27% of district learners meeting or exceeding state standards in English language arts and 11% of district learners meeting or exceeding state standards in mathematics.

The idea of creating a closer alignment between teacher quality ratings and student assessment outcomes is achieved by looking at the work of the teacher in the classroom as it relates to the Danielson Domains and the measures used for student achievement outcomes and growth. City (2011) suggested that we re-examine the instructional core and see it as the learner, the content and the facilitator with the task being at the center of the triangle of the three components of the core. City (2011) further suggested that it is important to make the type and level of learning a shared experience that people can talk about and learn from together – instructional rounds.

According to City (2011), “when teachers conduct instructional rounds, they focus on why a problem of practice persists school wide – and on what they can do about it” (p. 36). City (2011) suggested that rounds are different from the teacher evaluation process because they involve multiple elements including observation, discussion specifically related to strategies of improvement and a network of educators. City (2011) defined the problem of practice as “something the school cares about, feels stuck on, and wants to understand more deeply. A problem of practice focuses on instruction, is observable and actionable, connects to a broader strategy of improvement, and is high leverage” (p. 38).

The concern now becomes, if we implement and analyze more than the scheduled formal teacher observation to determine the teacher quality rating and include more frequent observations of teacher practice, then we will have more opportunity to identify strategies of improvement to leverage across classrooms to impact and improve student

achievement. Marshall (2012) suggested more frequent unannounced visits to the classroom as a strategy for determining what the teacher is doing day by day. With this information, we can provide feedback related to the qualities and characteristics of teachers as they interact with students, facilitate the content through the tasks assigned to students and utilize formative assessment to monitor student progress. More frequent classroom visits along with the implementation of the instructional rounds model of professional learning provides a larger window to the facilitation of learning, the teacher, the content and the task.

This practice of frequent observation and instructional rounds will serve as the first steps toward refocusing adult learning activities in the district. According to Kane, Gehlbach, Greenberg, Quinn, and Thal, (2015), one of the critical next steps toward increasing professional learning and reflection toward individual practice in the classroom is allowing teachers the opportunity to video and see themselves teach. Kane, et al. (2015) reported that after one year of study, this self-video practice has increased teacher reflection, lessened the confrontations of post-observation conferences and led to teachers watching multiple instances of themselves teaching. This pendulum of teachers evaluating their own quality of work within the classroom, instead of waiting for the evaluator to provide the sole view into the classroom practice, has shifted, according to Kane et al. (2015), to greater self-perception of the need for behavior change in the important work of teaching and learning.

Thus, our work continues as we look at the work of the intentionality of creating a relationship between teacher quality as measured by teacher ratings and student achievement as described through the varied measures of student outcomes. Darling-

Hammond (2012) suggested that key elements to a coherent approach include aligning professional learning and career development opportunities to improving teacher quality. According to Darling-Hammond (2012), creating a strong foundation at the onset of a teacher's career is an important part of school reform along with having highly skilled teachers and principals. Darling-Hammond (2012) further suggested that the highly skilled teacher is a "result of developing well-prepared teachers from recruitment through preparation and in-service professional development" (p. 9).

Darling-Hammond, Bae, Cook-Harvey et al. (2016) suggested that there are key features of effective professional development that lead to significant effects on student achievement. The suggestions for the District professional learning change plan to move staff toward sustaining teacher quality ratings and improving student achievement are inclusive of the features suggested by Darling-Hammond et al. (2016) to include approaches that:

- "focus on deepening teacher's content knowledge and instructional practices;
- function as a coherent part of a schools' improvement efforts, align with curriculum assessments, and standards, so that teachers can implement the knowledge and practices they learn in their classroom;
- occur in collaborative and collegial learning environments in which teachers participate in professional learning and together grapple with issues related to new content and instructional practices;
- provide authentic activities rooted in teachers' inquiry and reflection about practice within the context of the curriculum and students they teach;

- link to analysis of teaching and student learning, including the formative uses of assessment data; and
- are supported by coaching, modeling, observations, and feedback.” (p. 37)

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2016), the greatest improvements in student achievement have been associated with professional learning aligned with the six approaches above.

Student Growth and Teacher Quality

If the overarching goal is to improve student achievement, we must ask, What are the valid indicators of teacher performance? We must also ask ourselves not only what the teacher assesses, but how the teacher assesses. I believe it is in the “how” that will make a difference in the relationship between student achievement and teacher quality ratings.

William (2006) suggested that “teachers must maintain the fluency of their classroom routines, while at the same time disrupting them” (p. 19). The way the teacher finesses the classroom activities impacts the student learning. William (2006) said, “assessment for learning is the most powerful, and yet most neglected, aspect of teacher practice” (p. 20). William (2006) suggested that teachers develop strategies for learning, including sharing success criteria, engineering effective discussions, and providing feedback that engages students as part of what effective learning communities do to assess for learning. In addition, William (2006) highlighted the importance of students owning their learning and students serving as peer resources for each other. These five strategies allow teachers to adapt the learning environment for the student and begin to develop specific techniques for instructional practice connecting teaching, assessment

and learning. The work of the classroom centered around specific instructional strategies inclusive of the critical attributes of the Framework and the NWEA Learning Continuum are an important part of the changes required in the District.

The District created Teacher Evaluation Plan (Appendix B) includes various options for teachers to select as their individual measure of the collective growth of selected students in the classroom. As we revisit the effectiveness of the Teacher Evaluation Plan through the components of the change plan, it is important to revisit the list of assessments and their connection to classroom-centered learning activities. Tucker and Stronge (2005) suggested that we “select student assessments that are most closely aligned with existing curricula” (p. 101). According to Tucker and Stronge’s (2005), research reveals that it is important to ensure that value-added teacher evaluation plans include tests that are connected to what students are doing in the classroom. “If student assessment measures are unrelated to what has been taught, then they cannot be used to measure the impact of learning” (Tucker & Stronge, 2005, p. 101).

Change Challenges for Shifts in the Learning Environment

How do we create a shift in the District’s perspective on student assessments and their relatedness to instructional planning, teaching and student learning in order to promote the relationship between teacher quality ratings and student outcomes? As I consider arenas of change and the competencies of the District staff, I believe we begin the shift with professional learning. Wagner et al. (2006) suggested that “most efforts to improve education have at their core a focus on professional development as a way to build competency” (p. 99). Beginning with creating a new professional learning plan

related to the Framework's Components and Critical Attributes, the related assessments for student learning and the collaborative opportunities for reflection on teacher practice are the central themes of the change plan.

Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) suggested that, as adaptive leaders, we mobilize people to work toward a common purpose. The common purpose of the District lies in the desire to build competency and confidence in their collective practice to shift the representation of the District's proficiency as 18% of the learners, as reported by the Illinois State Board of Education, meet or exceed standards to a representation that is more reflective of the daily work of the District staff. Through the work of the District program evaluation, I identified through data collection and analysis the problem of high teacher quality ratings and low student achievement. Heifetz (2009) suggested that "the process of diagnosis and action begin with data collection and problem identification" (p. 6). The relevant literature shared through this change plan suggests the "why" and the "what next," as we prepare to take action. As Heifetz (2009) suggested, I have gained perspective related to the District as an observer "on the balcony," instead of a practitioner on the "dance floor." According to Heifetz (2009), from the "vantage point of the balcony, you may see a very different picture" (p. 7). From this perspective, I have noticed the need for change in the professional learning plan to provide opportunities for teachers and teacher evaluators that develop their understanding of the Framework and the NWEA MAP assessment as a tool for instruction.

To begin the important work of change it is essential to understand the factors, according to Knoster (1991), related to vision, consensus, skills, incentives, resources and an action plan. The analysis of the District "as it is" has provided the need to move

through a complex change process to create a more balanced state of teacher quality and student outcomes “to be” a more effective educational environment.

SECTION FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The data collection during the change plan allows a snapshot of the District's competency, conditions, culture, and context. By viewing the relevant quantitative and qualitative data in each of these components, I will focus on change opportunities to systematically address the challenges in the District. According to Wagner et al. (2006), we call these 4 C's the arenas of change. By examining these arenas, we can consider some strategies for improvement. While improving teaching and learning is the goal of the change plan, reviewing the interdependence of the competency, conditions, culture, and context will provide critical information to diagnose the system and implement school reform strategies. This mixed-method empirical approach will allow for an opportunity to analyze the data and hear the voice of the District.

Competency

Wagner et al. (2006) suggested that we begin with competencies. According to Wagner et al. (2006), "most efforts to improve education have at their core a focus on professional development as a way to build competency" (p. 99). When considering the skills and knowledge, or what Wagner et al. (2006) call competency, the District has devoted time to strengthening staff competency through professional development opportunities. The District Professional Development Plan, District Professional Development Participation Summary for teachers and evaluators related to the targeted areas: Danielson Framework and NWEA MAP, District Professional Learning Community Meeting agendas, and School Professional Learning Community Meeting agendas reveal the following: The District Professional Development Plan summary as

shown in Table 3 indicates 10 different areas of focus for professional learning activities throughout the school year. Of the 10 District professional learning areas, two were targeted to support the Framework and NWEA MAP. Table 3 summarizes the staff participation.

Table 3

District Professional Learning Participation Summary in Targeted Area, N=11 Evaluators, N=125 Teachers

	Summer prior to implementation	Year prior to implementation	Year prior to implementation and year of implementation	Year of implementation	Year of implementation
	Summer 2015 Day offsite conference	Fall 2014 Institute Day 2	Self-study 2014, 2015 and 2016	Fall 2015 Institute Day 2	Fall 2015 Institute Day 3
	NWEA Fusion	Danielson Domains and Components	Teachscape Evaluator Danielson Modules and Proficiency Exam	Danielson Framework and Teachscape	Danielson Lesson Planning
Number of participating evaluators	7 64%	8/11 73%	11/11 100%	8/11 73%	7/11 64%
Number of participating teachers	7 .05%	100/125 80%	14/125 11%	114/125 91%	97/125 78%
	14/136 11%	108/136 79%	25/136 18%	122/136 90%	104/136 76%

As shown in Table 4, of the available professional learning days in the District, the following activity occurred in the two targeted areas during the year of implementation. The table shows evidence that, of the 40 available opportunities for

professional learning throughout the year, the District dedicated two days to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Table 4

District Professional Learning Community Meetings Including NWEA MAP

Learning Community Meetings	Number and Percent
2 of the 4 District Institute Days Danielson Framework focus	2 50%
7 of the 10 half day District Mathematics Professional Learning Community Meetings	7 70%
14 of the 26 one hour School Mathematics Professional Learning Community Meetings with MAP focus	14 54%
Total Framework/NWEA MAP Focused Professional Learning Competency Building Activities	23/40 58%

An analysis of the competency data suggests that the District planned district-wide Institute Days to focus on the Danielson Framework and that more than 75% of teachers participated in the District Institute Days; a low percentage of teachers participated in self-study and offsite professional development. Based on the number of incidences that the District focused on NWEA MAP as indicated in the above table, it is evident that, of the 40 opportunities to include professional development for staff, 23 or 58% of the time available was used for competency building activities.

The District Professional Development Plan during the year of implementation of the Framework included learning activities for teachers as one of the 10 areas of focus. Fullan (2011) suggested that we focus on a small number of priorities. According to Fullan (2011) “successful change leaders focus on a few core priorities and are resolute

about them, and this can have a powerful combined impact on both performance and morale” (p. 139).

In addition, an analysis of school-level teacher evaluation and student growth as noted in Appendix E indicates:

- 6% of the District teachers that selected NWEA MAP as their student growth assessment are rated distinguished/excellent.
- 88% of the District teachers that selected NWEA MAP as their student growth assessment are rated proficient.
- 61% of the learners meet student growth proficiency gains as measured by NWEA MAP student growth and the District Teacher Evaluation Plan rating of 2.5 or greater.
- 11% of students meet or exceed standards in mathematics as measured by PARCC.

The change plan suggests that we were able to increase the 6% of teachers that selected NWEA MAP and were rated excellent to a greater percentage of excellent teachers in the District through a deep focus on the professional learning. The change plan also suggests that we were able to increase the academic achievement of learners meeting NWEA MAP student growth targets to more closely align with the 88% of proficient teachers.

Conditions

One of the key arenas for change is the presence of conditions that support effective teaching and learning within schools. According to Wagner et al. (2006), “the conditions are the external architecture surrounding student learning” (p. 101). The

district conditions include little time for visits to the classroom except for those required by the Teacher Evaluation Plan (Appendix B). Data analysis revealed that informal observations in the District occurred with a frequency of two per teacher. Marshall (2012) suggested that we “improve teacher assessment by replacing announced, long-form evaluation visits with as many as 10 shorter, unannounced visits with timely, valuable, face to face feedback” (p. 19). The District data representation indicates that this does not occur.

According to Danielson (2013), engaging students in learning (Domain 3, component C) is the heart of the Framework for Teaching and requires teachers to promote problem solving through well-designed learning tasks. Because this is considered to be of high relevance, I would suggest that the teacher rating in this area is of considerable importance in determining teacher quality as measured by the Framework. The District Teacher Evaluation Plan designates overall teacher quality ratings as excellent (3.5-4.0), proficient (2.5-3.49), needs improvement (1.5-2.49) or unsatisfactory (1.0-1.49). The District ratings at the heart of the Framework represent Proficiency, as indicated in 3c Engaging Students in Learning, where the average score was 2.96 (Appendix A).

While the formal observation data indicate this as an area of proficiency, how would this change if evaluators increased their frequency of visits? The District has an average rating of 2.96 in this critical area of evaluation. At the same time, the District has 11% of students meeting student achievement expectations as measured by the PARCC state mandated assessment in mathematics, 23% of students meeting end-of-year MAP mathematics RIT expectations (Appendix E), and 61% of students meeting student

growth expectations. These indicators show that staff are being evaluated as proficient in Engaging Students in Learning while student achievement is below expectations in the area of mathematics as measured by PARCC and MAP. According to Danielson (2007),

If one component of the framework for teaching can claim to be the most important, it is student engagement. Engaging students in learning is the *raison d'être* of schools; it is through active engagement that students learn complex content. All of the rest of the framework is in the service of student engagement.
(p. 82)

Considering this, teachers with an overall teacher quality rating of proficient would have the qualities to engage students in learning to meet the demands of state and local assessments at a level of proficiency. The District data is contrary to the understanding of expectations of the Framework.

Culture

The District Goals are the underlying vision for the development of the culture of the District. Wagner et al. (2006) defined “culture as the shared values beliefs, assumptions and behaviors related to students and learning, teaching and teaching. Culture refers to the invisible but powerful meanings and mindsets held individually and collectively throughout the system” (p. 102). During the fall of the school year the goals communicated to District stakeholders were:

1. To promote a district culture of high expectations that includes avenues for staff, parents and student to be invested in the success of all students.
2. To implement a plan for continued academic improvement.

3. To continue to main a positive school climate through pro-social student initiatives and incentives, positive communication, and increased community and parent/guardian involvement.
4. To develop and present to the Board of Education a balanced budget each contract year.
5. To implement the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan and ensure that all Life/Safety Work in the plan is completed.
6. To encourage and accommodate opportunities for experience, both passively and actively, in the fine arts, music, dance, literature and performance.
7. To continue to establish and maintain equitable program services and activities across the District at all schools.

Goals one and two specifically address high expectations for student success and a plan for continued academic improvement. The District is committed to supporting these two areas; however, there are some challenges as it relates to achievement in mathematics through new rigorous content requiring professional learning and scheduling.

Knoster (1991) suggested that change requires vision, skills, incentives, resources and an action plan. While the District has a vision for change stated through the District's goals, the resources needed to continue to enable teachers professional learning, peer observation and planning are needed through more funding and supports. When an element is missing in the process of change, according to Knoster (1991), this causes frustration.

An identified area in the district that is currently operating in a state of frustration is the time spent with students on mathematics instruction. Looking deeply at the student

outcomes as measured by the state of Illinois PARCC assessment we know that 11% of students meet or exceed standards in mathematics. We also know that 23% of students meet end of year MAP RIT expectations. To gain an understanding of the conditions surrounding mathematics the 3rd-8th grade schedules were reviewed. The following summary in Table 5 brings to light a lack of consistency in expectations to improve and sustain mathematics instruction based on the 3rd-8th grade mathematics schedules.

Table 5
Number of Uninterrupted Instructional Mathematics Minutes Daily per Teacher

Grade Level	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5
3 rd	60	60	60		
4 th				60-140	70
5 th				40-140	70
6 th				80	70
7 th				60	70
8 th				80	70

Note: Data were not collected for shaded cells.

The data represented by the teacher schedules indicate that the District has a culture of inconsistent time for mathematics learning expectations across some of the grade bands. The inconsistency of the time spent on mathematics instruction is challenging to a plan for improvement. The District is working diligently to increase student achievement in mathematics and reading; however, more time is needed to create cultural shifts occurring over a greater span to impact the collective mindset.

The District's performing arts concept school has student performances to allow students to demonstrate proficiency in the arts and schedules may be impacted during the weeks leading up to school performances, which further impacts effective teaching and learning. The schedule during the performance seasons reduces the number of minutes in

mathematics because classes are cancelled for student rehearsals throughout the week. Again, the culture of the daily teaching and learning shifts in priority to the performing arts for students to have multiple and varied learning experiences.

Context

The Wagner et al. (2006) fourth arena of change is the context of our work. According to Wagner et al. (2006), context is referring to “skill demands all students must meet to succeed.” (p. 104). For schools, this larger context consists of State accountability measures. Narrowing the context to the local District’s demands include contextual measures as defined by student outcomes on the NWEA MAP assessment. We are looking particularly at the District’s mathematics assessment scores.

Additionally, the context of the District requires teachers and administrators to work within the specific demographics of a low socio-economic-status minority community. Working within this context requires an understanding of the improvement methods that specifically support a community of learners that are 83% minority and 86% free and reduced-price lunch. According to Jensen (2009) “many children raised in poverty enter school a step behind their well-off peers” (p. 38). However, Jensen (2009) further suggested,

there is a tremendous opportunity during the school years for significant transformation. Low SES children’s behavior is an adaptive response to a chronic condition of poverty, but a brain that is susceptible to adverse environmental effects is equally susceptible to positive, enriching effects. (p. 45)

Teachers working with students of poverty have an opportunity to provide school experiences that will stimulate and enrich their community of learners.

The District categorizes 86% of their students as students of poverty. Including more opportunities for professional development to understand strategies to support students of poverty would be a good recommendation for the District.

Perspectives

The voice of District leadership is critical to the understanding and analysis of the data surrounding teacher quality ratings and student achievement outcomes. This process of adding perspective through interview strategies, as defined by James, Milenkiewicz, and Bucknam (2008), allows us to “reveal information about the worldview of a single individual” (p. 69). According to James et al. (2008), this mixed methodology of student learning data mixed with community perception about student learning will support the question regarding the impact of systems and programming on student learning. The perspectives of school principals and the school superintendent add the viewpoint of District administrators. The interview questions in Appendix D were included in the interviews to gain the administrators’ perspectives:

1. What do you find to be noteworthy as you read the outcomes of the program evaluation teacher quality rating and student growth measured and their relationship?
2. What measures would you consider employing to address your findings you noted in question one?
3. How does the school district design a coherent framework for professional learning related to your noteworthy findings and their relationship to teacher quality ratings and student achievement?

Principal and Superintendent Perspectives

Primary, elementary and middle school principals participated in the interview process by first reading the program evaluation, *Pursing and Understanding of Leading Students to Excellence*, and responding to the three interview questions to share their perspectives.

In response to question one, “What do you find to be noteworthy as you read the outcomes of the program evaluation teacher quality rating, the student growth measure and their relationship?”, the principals shared several thoughts.

Interviewee A stated,

If 94% of the teachers in the District are rated proficient or excellent according to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the student growth ratings should mirror the teacher rating. You would think if you are proficient or excellent, your students should be higher. (Personal communication, December, 15, 2016)

Interviewee B wondered if the student growth scores were lower because of the type of assessment we used to measure student growth. She asked, “Did the assessment assess what the students learned in the classroom, was it aligned with the instruction that occurred?” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016).

According to the program evaluation data in Appendix F, seven of the 81 teachers in the District are rated excellent. While this represents only 9% of the evaluated staff, Interviewee B suggested that “this correlates with the bell curve tapering at the end with the 9% of excellent teachers and the greater amount of ratings near the peak of the bell” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016). Interviewee B also thought about the following questions that may have impacted student achievement outcomes:

- “What is the teacher doing in the classroom related to the assessment?”
- “Is there inter-rater reliability?”

- “Do all evaluators see the same thing as excellent?”
- “Is there personal bias?” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016).

The principals’ reflections include a myriad of ideas when asked what methods they would consider employing to address what they discovered about the relationship between teacher quality ratings and student achievement outcomes. Interviewee A suggested, “we work toward having multiple evaluators complete formal observations for one staff member to increase our inter-rater reliability” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016). Interviewee A also recommended that “we have more informal observations to more accurately document what happens in the classroom and we go to the classroom more often so we can compare lessons to each other” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016).

As the principals considered the third question, “How does the school district design a coherent framework for professional learning related to your noteworthy findings and their relationship to teacher quality ratings and student achievement?”, suggestions were made that provide a plan for supporting teacher education within the District. According to Interviewee A, “the central focus in designing a plan for professional learning is to create an understanding of how the assessment transforms to the daily instruction in the classroom impacting student growth” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016). Interviewee B suggested that “having conversations about the assessment and what outcomes are desired is critical to developing a comprehensive professional learning plan” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016). Additionally, according to the Interviewee B, “when teachers

understand the desired outcomes and communicate the goal to their students, performance improves” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016).

Interviewee B also suggested,

a deeper study of the Framework for teaching and the relationship between the four Domains and how students learn. It would be a good idea to create opportunities for teachers to study and analyze NWEA MAP data along the MAP Learning Continuum to improve instructional practice. (Personal communication, December 15, 2016)

Along with these recommendations, Interviewee A also suggested:

- “Begin with end-of-year goals and school improvement plans as a central focus for each school and teacher.
- Create a district-wide, long-term professional development calendar that focuses deeply on building assessment capacity in all staff.
- Revise professional learning community meeting agendas to include weekly time to study assessment and instruction and their interrelatedness.” (Personal communication, December 15, 2016)

The school superintendent shared reflections after studying the Teacher Quality Ratings data represented in Appendix F. Of particular interest are the teacher quality rating outcomes, which indicate that 96% of the teachers are rated as proficient or excellent. The superintendent also noted the PARCC assessment scores shown in Table 11, which indicate that 27% of district learners meet or exceed state standards in English language arts, and 11% of district learners meet or exceed state standards in mathematics. Additionally, the superintendent noted in studying the data presented that 94% of the teachers using NWEA MAP as their student growth assessment are rated excellent or proficient while only 61% of the learners are meeting NWEA MAP student growth

proficiency goals. However, according to the Illinois School Report Card, PARCC District Composite Assessment Scores for the District in Table 11, the number of students approaching, meeting and exceeding on the PARCC assessment is reported to be 57% in English language arts and 33% in mathematics.

The superintendent noted that the PARCC composite scores of 57% of students approaching, meeting or exceeding expectations in English language arts closely aligns with the 61% of learners reported to be meeting student growth goals measured by NWEA MAP during the year of the study. The superintendent suggested that “while it appears that 96% of teachers receiving proficient or excellent ratings does not align with the student outcomes, the student outcomes themselves make sense when we look at PARCC English language arts and NWEA MAP” (Personal communication, December 29, 2016). The superintendent went on to suggest that “while the State accountability measure includes meeting or exceeding standards, it would be important,” in her opinion, “to include approaching, meeting and exceeding when considering accountability outcomes particularly during this time of transition to new learning standards” (Personal communication, December 29, 2016).

The superintendent shared that the District does have important work to do in the area of value-added teacher evaluation. According to the superintendent, “the work needed is rooted in reflection of our current Teacher Evaluation Plan (Appendix B) and the assessments at each grade level selected to measure student growth along with more rigorous expectations of formal observation and teacher rating” (Personal communication, December 29, 2016). Moving forward in the interview and considering

what methods to employ to address what appears to be noteworthy data from the program evaluation, several recommendations were suggested by the superintendent including:

- “studying the Danielson Framework Domain ratings in the District
- studying the evaluator trends in the District
- analysis of teacher lesson plans to determine if the verbiage from the Danielson Framework is purposefully included in their planning/thinking processes
- deep study of the teachers that are rated excellent and their student outcomes.”

(Personal communication, December 29, 2016)

The superintendent went on to suggest,

a new professional learning paradigm shift requires us to question our own objectives in order to create a change in practice and outcomes. So, the real question is, if the goal is to improve student achievement, what are the valid indicators of teacher performance? In all of our work with teaching and learning it is not what you do but how you do it. Yes, we assess but how we assess is what will make the difference. (Personal communication, December 29, 2016)

Qualitative Data Themes

The themes that emerged throughout the interviews with key stakeholders represented similar reflections, questions and analysis of teacher quality ratings and student growth measures in the district as they shared their individual perspectives. As I reflected on each conversation individually and considered the collective response I found particular attention focused on the following themes:

1. The importance of the teacher understanding the relationship between meaningful assessment connected to classroom instruction

2. Aligning instructional planning to expected student outcomes
3. Strengthening inter-rater reliability among district evaluators
4. Developing a professional learning plan to support teacher growth in effective instruction aligned to the critical attributes of the Danielson Framework for Teaching
5. Understanding the importance of how we teach students to ensure that what we teach students is deepened through our daily classroom practice
6. Understanding what the “excellent” teacher is doing in the classroom and how it connects to improved student outcomes measured through appropriately matched student assessments

These qualitative data themes allow us to think deeply about how we work to develop a coherent plan for the District to sustain and improve student achievement. If we can understand these trends in our reflection of the school improvement process we are able to work toward a successful paradigm for change that promotes success for all.

Table 6 shows PARCC assessment scores from spring 2015.

Table 6
Spring 2015 PARCC Assessment Scores

	Did Not Meet Standards	Partially Met Standards	Approached Standards	Met Standards	Exceeded Standards
District Composite	23 %	33%	26%	17%	1%
State Composite	14%	24%	28%	29%	4%
District English Language Arts	17%	26%	30%	25%	2%
State ELA	14%	20%	28%	32%	6%
District	29%	40%	21%	10%	1%

Mathematics					
State	15%	28%	29%	25%	3%
Mathematics					

Table 7 shows the NWEA MAP proficiency summary from Spring 2015.

Table 7
Spring 2015 NWEA MAP Proficiency Summary

	Academic Warning	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Reading	15.5 %	50.8%	27.7%	6.1%
Mathematics	20.2%	52%	25.1%	2.6%

SECTION SIX: A VISION OF SUCCESS (TO BE)

Arenas of Change

The elements in the District related to the context, culture, conditions, and competencies provide us with a snapshot of the current state of the systems at work that support value-added measures of student achievement and their relationship to teacher quality. Wagner et al. (2006) suggested “a system is a perceived whole whose elements ‘hang together’ because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose” (p. 97). The study of the current elements provides a picture of the current state. This current state presents gaps in the connectedness of opportunities for building competency toward enhancing teacher quality as measured by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and NWEA MAP achievement outcomes.

Creating a vision of success involves developing a plan to transform the District and move through change efforts toward the goal of a future reality where a sustainable and connected relationship exists between teacher quality ratings and student achievement outcomes. According to Wagner et al. (2006), this vision of success represents “a systemic and dynamic vision of the future to which you aspire” (p. 119). The reflections, planning, action steps and activities that occur between the current and future state of the District is the work that provides a foundation for progress and change.

The current District competency, as it relates to professional learning opportunities for teachers and evaluators to study the Framework and to study the NWEA MAP Learning Continuum, can be developed to provide a stronger network of learning. While developing a network of learning it is also important to shift the current conditions related to instructional monitoring to more frequent informal classroom walkthroughs and

peer-based professional learning activities. The goal within this more frequent walkthrough framework is for the District culture to shift towards higher expectations for learning through the lens of classroom teachers and building leaders engaged in ongoing collaborative work together. Working toward a District state of focused professional learning, frequent observation and high expectations for learning is the desired future state of the District. Wagner et al. (2006), suggested that “by context we are especially referring to “skill demands” all students must meet to succeed” (p. 104). The ultimate goal in the change arena is to impact the context, to improve teaching and learning in order to increase the number of students meeting and exceeding local and state standards in reading and mathematics. Looking deeply at the organizational change plan, if my goals are achieved, we would find the following vision of success.

Context for Success

The vision would encompass a shift toward instruction that supports small-group, differentiated, student-centered learning with ongoing school-based improvement plans. The purpose of the shift would be to increase the number of students demonstrating competency on the state assessment (PARCC) in mathematics from 11% to 50% and the number of students meeting local assessment (NWEA MAP) in mathematics from 27.7% to 50%. It is important in shifting the context of learning to use specific strategies to focus on improvement in mathematics, as it has been identified as an area of critical need for the school district. Specific actions were taken in the school district to develop a deeper content knowledge of the New Illinois Learning Standards for Mathematics, varied professional learning experiences such as peer coaching, study of mathematics resources and provide ongoing collaborative planning meetings to align curriculum maps

and analyze student data. Development of common assessments and ongoing progress monitoring is essential to the data analysis required for focused school improvement. The district will also invest in human resources to provide a cohesive math intervention program allowing for additional small group learning experiences to occur throughout the week.

Culture for Success

A shift in culture to increase the amount of time teaching mathematics in the District from inconsistent instructional minutes to consistency at all grade levels is important to emphasize the importance and value of mathematics. The district will implement an uninterrupted math block throughout the school year to increase expectations for learning through consistent schedules. Building principals will work together to create uninterrupted blocks for mathematics instruction and modified block schedules during elementary school performing arts and leadership activities to sustain mathematics instructional focus. Rebuilding teacher accountability through collaborative mathematics networks for planning, sharing of instructional practice, development and analysis of common assessments and block scheduling are important actions for the district to implement. The vision for success through these specific strategies and actions is to create a culture for high expectations for learning mathematics.

Conditions for Success

A shift from the “dog and pony” show, as described by Marshall (2012), “to shorter, unannounced visits supported by timely, valuable, face to face feedback” (p. 19) is a central focus for improving the school district conditions for measuring instructional practice through informal observations. Moving the district conditions from instructional

collaboration to instructional rounds, lesson videoing, collaborative analysis and frequent monitoring will allow teacher teams to engage in meaningful ongoing professional learning and view multiple instances of their own teaching to determine effectiveness and areas for re-focus. It is important to align our work by re-examining the instructional core, according to City (2011), or the relationship between the learner, the content and the facilitator, with the task being at the center of the triangle of the three components of the core. City (2011) further suggested that it is important to make the type and level of learning a shared experience that people can talk about and learn from together; this would take the form of instructional rounds.

Competencies for Success

A shift will occur in the district competency from the current 10 different professional learning areas to a deeper focus on the Framework for Teaching and NWEA MAP. This shift will provide a greater percentage of time for the two key learning areas through ongoing professional growth activities. This shift will also facilitate moving from 58% of the learning opportunities for the key areas to 80% of learning experiences in the two key areas. Including independent learning, District planned learning, school-based learning, peer learning and video learning as components of the overall professional development plan will increase teacher agency.

To develop instructional leadership opportunities for principals, the District will shift the focus during monthly principal meetings to strategies for school improvement and school-based professional learning plans. The district leadership team will provide additional opportunities for principal collaboration, principal data analysis meetings, and shared teacher evaluation to increase inter-rater reliability. These shifts will facilitate

utilization of the Danielson Framework for Teaching resources and NWEA MAP Learning Continuum resources to support principal professional growth.

The result of the shifts in context, culture, conditions and competencies developed through the vision of success strategies and actions will result in creating an environment with a deep understanding of the components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and how to sustain and positively impact student achievement in the school district.

SECTION SEVEN: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Bridging the As-Is, To-Be Gap

The heart of the change plan is bridging the gap between the current and future state of the District through strategies and actions. The vision of success requires teachers and administrators to engage in strategic planning, strategy implementation and a clear district and school-based action plan. Several levels of change will promote movement from vision to reality, including staff professional development, leadership strategies and communication strategies.

Professional Development

Moving the level of professional development to an environment with a deep understanding of teaching and learning, instructional best practice and ongoing formative assessment framed through the lens of the Framework for Teaching and the NWEA MAP Learning Continuum will create a foundation for change. According to Darling-Hammond (2011), after we evaluate teachers and analyze outcomes, our next steps include deepening professional learning by:

“Creating a strong infrastructure for professional learning that is:

- Responsive to teacher and principal needs
- Sustained and readily available
- Grounded in curriculum content
- Supportive of diverse learners
- Supported by coaching
- Connected to collaborative work in professional learning communities

- Integrated into school and classroom planning around curriculum, instruction, and assessment.” (Darling-Hammond, 2011, p. 32)

The hope for the District is a professional learning environment that will support a deeper and shared understanding of the domains, components, and critical attributes of the Framework for Teaching through a common language and common activities. The professional learning activities will make explicit connections between teacher evaluation and student learning. According to Tucker and Stronge (2005),

teachers make a difference in student learning. Given the clear and undeniable link that exists between teacher effectiveness and student learning, we support the use of student achievement information in teacher assessment. Student achievement can, and indeed should, be an important source of feedback on the effectiveness of schools, administrators, and teachers. (p.102)

The professional learning activities were focused on the Framework coupled with the NWEA MAP Learning Continuum as an explicit strategy to connect teacher quality ratings and student outcomes.

Leadership Strategies

Developing principals and their ability to serve as instructional leaders guiding professional growth activities in their schools requires specific strategies and actions. To that end, the administrative evaluation team will employ inter-rater reliability measures by sharing evaluations of staff across the District. Specifically, this will entail creating a weekly informal instructional walkthrough schedule to observe the instructional core, scheduling the videoing of lessons and collaborative post-video meetings, and sharing formal observations between evaluators for multiple scoring. The administrative team

will also encourage teacher agency for independent study and ongoing progress monitoring of school improvement goals through the use of the NWEA MAP learning continuum. These activities will promote development of instructional plans that facilitate skill development focused on improving student competency after formal and informal observation meetings. The leadership actions will support:

- Developing principals as instructional leaders
- Increasing educator understanding of the Framework
- Developing inter-rater reliability
- Implementing consistent instructional collaboration opportunities
- Increasing teacher agency
- Increasing expectations for learning
- Developing content knowledge and data informed instruction
- Creating shared accountability for teacher quality evaluation and rating

Communication Strategies

The importance of communication within the change model is to engage all stakeholders in the strategies and actions required for the future vision of the District. According to Wagner et al. (2006), “leaders help educators and community members understand the need and urgency for change. The shareholders begin to focus on how they need to adapt their roles to enable students to succeed in the twenty-first century” (p. 145). Clear and effective communication of the strategies and actions allows the District staff to see the vision and how they can share in the vision. According to Wagner et al. (2006), “seeing the need to work together in new ways, especially more collaboratively” (p. 145) increases the intentionality and focus on improvement.

Knoster (1991) provided a model of factors in managing change as a way that leaders can understand and connect to the people in the organization. The first priority in communication for the District is to provide clarity of vision. According to Knoster (1991), creating the vision can be more important than the vision itself. Creating the vision requires clear communication to diminish confusion. The critical first steps taken in the District's change plan are important in creating a perspective, which supports a direction for teaching and learning. Knoster (1991) suggested vision, skills, incentives, resources and an action plan. The District Professional Development Plan will be the vehicle for communication and will outline the following action plan (Figure 1):

- Problem definition
- Professional learning focus (vision)
- Professional learning activities and resources (skills/resources)
- Instructional monitoring through frequent walkthroughs (skills/resources)
- Student competency analysis (incentives)
- Shared accountability (incentives)
- Coherence and innovation activities

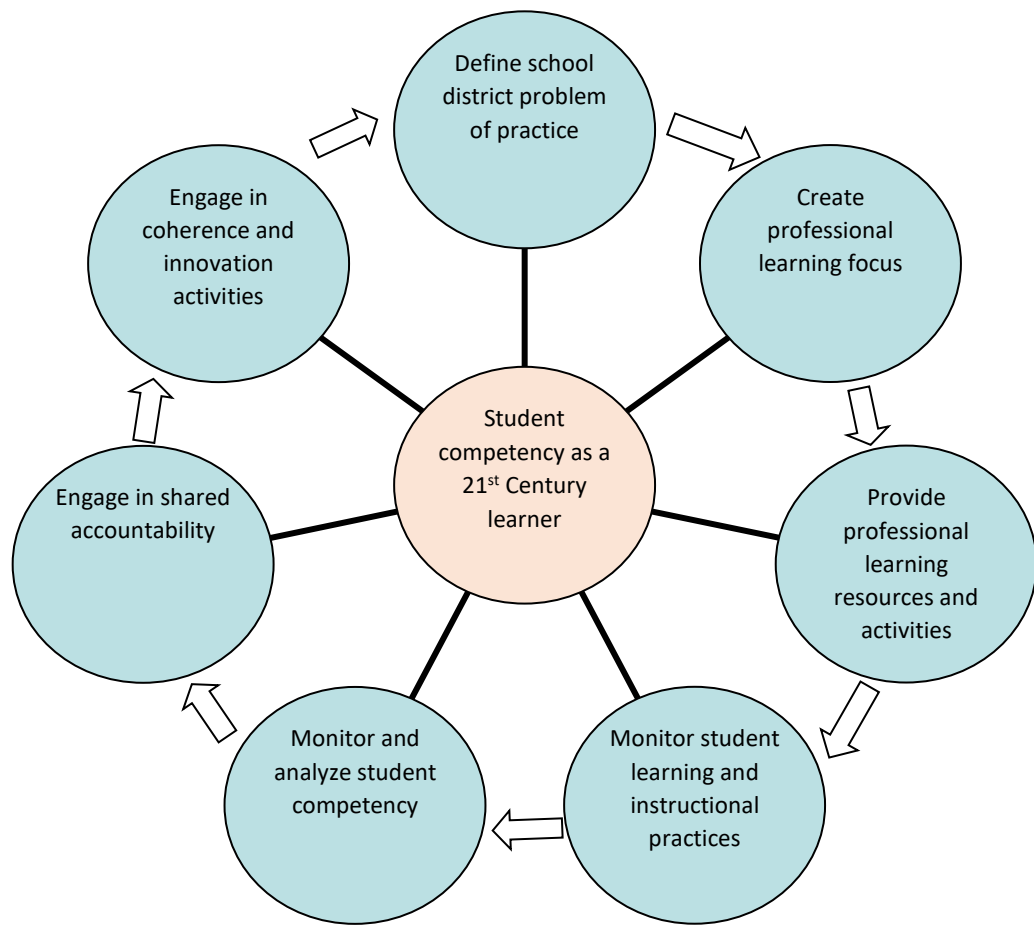


Figure 1. P.U.L.S.E. School Improvement Communication Wheel

To allow District stakeholders an opportunity to engage in the work in a meaningful and significant manner, the change plan will be shared with all tiers of the community. Students, parents, teachers, administrators and school board members all have a role in leading students to excellence. Effective communication will be developed through presentations at board of education meetings, written letters to board of education members, parents and community members, town hall parent meetings, memoranda to staff, face-to-face meetings with staff, written plans during administrative

team meetings with school principals and superintendent of schools, and assemblies with students.

The vision of the District's future is deeply connected to the vision of creating students that demonstrate competency in meeting and exceeding state standards, creating teachers that are demonstrating excellence in teaching as measured by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and creating a community of leaders that engage in innovative activities that build teacher capacity and increase student achievement. The inherent goal in changing the District's competency, conditions, culture and context is to increase the awareness of the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement. The teacher makes a difference in leading students to excellence!

Strategies and Actions

The issues that are important to address associated with the context, competency, conditions and culture in the district are shown below in Figure 2, Strategies and Action Chart. The purpose of the chart is to depict a process to develop Educators with a deep understanding of the components and elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFT) and the shifts required which will positively impact student achievement.

In summary, the steps required to bridge the as-is, to-be gap within the school District will provide transitions strategies and actions for all stakeholders. Through clearly defined and explicit professional development, leadership strategies, and communication strategies steps will be taken toward creating excellence in every classroom.

Current State – As IS	Strategy	Actions	Goal – To Be
(Context) Low achievement in mathematics (11% of students meet/exceeding state standards)	Focus on improvement in mathematics Develop content knowledge in mathematics Inform instruction through data	Allocate human and financial resources to support mathematics Provide professional learning experiences in math Align Math Curriculum Maps Analyze student data and plan instruction based on data during PLC meetings	(Context) Close the achievement gap to a minimum of 50% of students meeting/exceeding standards
(Competency) Cursory understanding of the Danielson Framework for Teaching	Develop principals as instructional leaders Increase educators understanding of the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FfT) Increase Teacher Agency Develop Inter-rater reliability strategies and actions	Implement monthly principal meetings focused on math instructional shifts in FfT domain 1 and 3 Provide school based professional learning plans on Danielson FfT Use teacher leaders to design and lead PLC meetings Create shared evaluation schedule for principals	(Competency) Ongoing professional growth activities based on school level needs in support of the instructional shifts required by the Danielson Framework for Teaching
(Conditions) Infrequent instructional monitoring	Implement consistent instructional collaboration opportunities Increase teacher agency	Instructional rounds Implement teacher instructional videoing and collaborative analysis for professional learning	(Conditions) Frequent instructional walkthroughs and peer based professional learning activities

Figure 2 Strategies and Actions Chart

<p>(Culture)</p> <p>Inconsistent learning expectations</p>	<p>Increase time for mathematics instruction</p> <p>Increase expectations for learning</p> <p>Consistent instructional schedules</p>	<p>Work with principals to create uninterrupted math blocks for K through 8th grade</p> <p>Provide professional learning focused on FFT Domains 1, 2 and 3</p> <p>Create modified schedules during performing arts and leadership activities to sustain math instruction</p>	<p>(Culture)</p> <p>High expectations for learning</p>
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Figure 2 Strategies and Actions Chart (continued)

Figure 3 depicts the District's Professional Development Plan Year at a Glance.

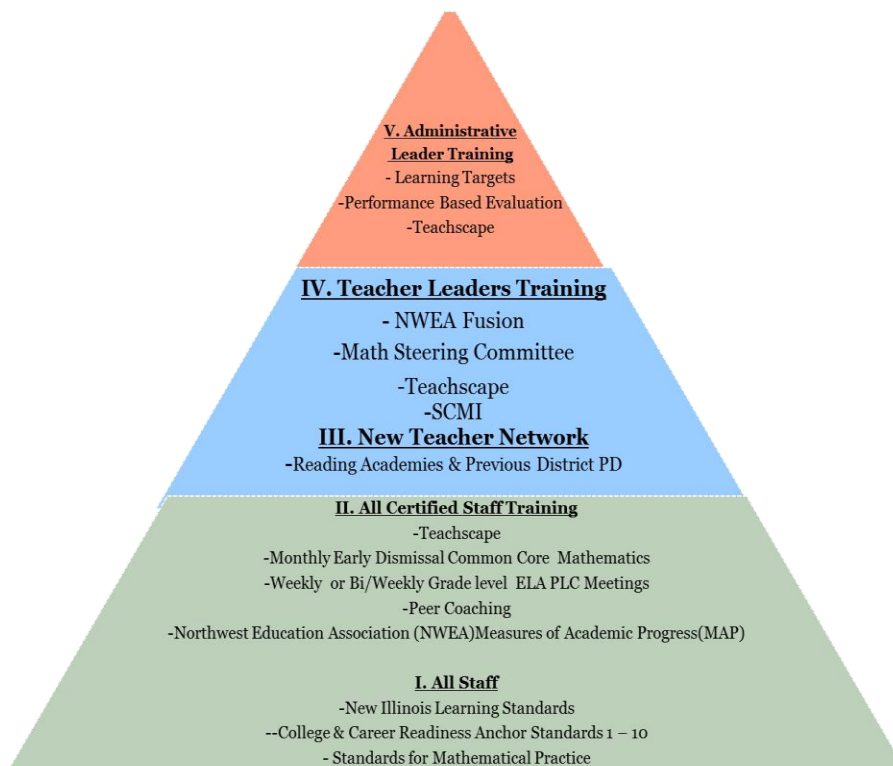


Figure 3. Professional Development Plan Year at a Glance

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Teachscape Score Tree Map

Six Components of Domain 1: Planning and Preparation					
1a Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy	1b Demonstrating knowledge of students	1c Setting Instructional Outcomes	1d Demonstrating knowledge of resources	1e Designing coherent instruction	1f Designing student assessments
3.14	3.13	3.0	3.0	2.97	2.89
Five Components of Domain 2: Classroom Environment					
2a Creating an environment of respect and rapport	2b Establishing a culture for learning	2c Managing classroom procedures	2d Managing student behavior	2e Organizing physical space	
3.32	3.11	3.03	3.08	3.19	
Five Components of Domain 3: Instruction					
3a Communicating with students	3b Using questioning and discussion techniques	3c Engaging students in learning	3d Using assessment in instruction	3e Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness	
3.11	2.85	2.96	2.91	3.18	
Six Components of Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities					
4a Reflection on teaching	4b Maintaining accurate records	4c Communicating with families	4d Participating in a professional community	4e Growing and developing professionally	4f Showing professionalism
Component not scored	Component not scored	3.31	Component not scored	3.18	Component not scored

Appendix B: 2015-16 District Teacher Evaluation Plan

The Danielson Framework will be used in conjunction with the student growth measures to provide a comprehensive assessment of teacher performance that includes professional practice and student growth measures.

Multiple measures of educator's practice, which include frequent observations using the *Danielson Framework*, conferences, regular feedback, and student growth measures, provide a complete picture of an educator's performance and create meaningful dialogue and evaluations.

Probationary Teachers

Probationary teachers and tenured teachers who received rating of "needs improvement" or "unsatisfactory" on their prior evaluation will have minimum of three (3) observations at least one-hundred and fifteen (115) calendar days before the last day of the school year. At least two (2) of the observations will be formal observations. The first formal observation shall take place by November 15th of each year.

Tenured Teachers

Tenured teachers who received an evaluation rating of "proficient" or "excellent" on their prior evaluation will have a minimum of two (2) observations, one of which will be formal. Formal observations of tenured teachers will occur between October 15th and the one-hundred and fifteenth (115) calendar days before the last day of the school year, exclusive of December unless altered by mutual agreement.

Formal Observation

The following shall comprise the formal observation procedure:

1. Formal Observations:
 - a. All formal observations shall be conducted with the full knowledge of the teacher being evaluated.
 - b. Formal observations will be for a minimum of forty-five (45) minutes at a time, or a complete lesson, or an entire class period.
 - c. Each formal observation shall include a pre-conference, the observation and a post-conference, as described below.
2. Pre-Observation Conference: A Pre-Observation conference is required prior to each formal observation to help the teacher and evaluator determine the primary focus of the observation. Prior to the pre-conference, the teacher will submit to the qualified evaluator a written lesson plan and/or other evidence of planning for the instruction that will be conducted during the formal observation and make recommendations for areas on which the qualified evaluator should focus during the observation. In the Pre-Observation conference the following information may be discussed:
 - a. The objective that will receive primary emphasis during the observation.

- b. Methods the teacher may use to help the students achieve the lesson objective.
 - c. Expected student behavior and anticipated outcomes.
3. Post-Observation Conference: A Post-Observation Conference shall be held within fifteen (15) school days of the formal observation, unless rescheduled by mutual agreement. The teacher shall be provided with a copy of the formal observation notes, which may include areas of strength, areas of consideration, recommendations and questions from the qualified evaluator, the day before the post-observation conference. Information collected in the observation and from the Pre-Observation Conference shall form the basis of the discussion in the Post-Observation Conference. A written observation report, including specific recommendations, shall be given to the teacher within fifteen (15) school days after the post-conference.

Informal Observation

An informal observation is an unscheduled, unannounced observation of a teacher. A qualified evaluator may conduct as many informal observations as he/she deems necessary. Following an informal observation, the qualified evaluator will provide feedback to the teacher orally or in writing. If the feedback is in writing, the teacher will be given an opportunity for an in-person discussion with the evaluator, if requested.

Student Growth Measures Used in Educator Evaluation

Introduction to Student Growth

In alignment with the PERA legislation, the School District will incorporate student growth measures into its educator evaluation system beginning in 2015-16 school year.

The PERA Joint Committee, comprised of equal representation of educators and administrators, met on a regular basis in 2014-15 to design these student growth measures. The Joint Committee was comprised of eight educators

The Joint Committee has designed the student growth component with the following core beliefs in mind:

- Students are our number one focus
- All students should make a minimum of one year's growth
- Students performing below grade level should make more than one year's growth
- All staff have high expectations of students
- We will use rigorous assessment tools
- Professional development is a shared responsibility and a tool to improve teacher practice
- This plan will be flexible, manageable and meaningful
- Collaboration and resources are critical to ensure all students are successful

By using student growth measures in an accurate and meaningful way, educators can implement strategies, which support students to achieve their highest potential and maximize growth. Using student growth, allows the educator to monitor student progress throughout the year and adapt

teaching methods accordingly. This in turn, consistently lets the educator know how students are progressing, based upon the use of assessment data.

Using Measures of Student Growth

Student growth is defined as a measurable change in a student's or group of students' knowledge or skills, as evidenced by two or more assessments, between two or more points in time. Growth measures average change in student scores from one point in time to the next.

Student Growth Guidelines

Each educator needs to use at least two assessments, according to state law. The educators in the School District will use two assessments as required by law. To enhance collaboration and ensure all students across the school show growth, educators will use a variety of assessments, including, MAP, DRA, MARS Tasks, and Achieve.

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENTS AND GROWTH MODEL TO BE USED

Type I and Type II Type III Writing

Growth Model: Simple Growth

Growth Target: The 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 growth target will be the equivalent of one year's growth between measurement points.

% of Students Meeting Growth Target		Type I or II Growth Rating
70% and above	4.0	Excellent
50-69%	3.0	Proficient
40-49%	2.0	Needs Improvement
Below 40%	1.0	Unsatisfactory

Student Growth 15% / 15%

	Type I or Type II (15%)
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		Excellent		Proficient		Needs Improvement		Unsatisfactory	
Type III (15%)	Excellent	4.0	Excellent	3.5	Excellent	3.0	Proficient	2.5	Proficient
	Proficient	3.5	Excellent	3.0	Proficient	2.5	Proficient	2.0	Needs Improvement
	Needs Improvement	3.0	Proficient	2.5	Proficient	2.0	Needs Improvement	1.5	Needs Improvement
	Unsatisfactory	2.5	Proficient	2.0	Needs Improvement	1.5	Needs Improvement	1.0	Unsatisfactory

Summative Student Growth Rating

Summative Student Growth Rating	Thresholds
Unsatisfactory	3.5-4.0 Excellent
Needs Improvement	2.5-3.49 Proficient
Proficient	1.5-2.49 Needs Improvement
Excellent	1.0-1.49 Unsatisfactory

Summative Evaluation Rating

				Overall Teacher Practice Rating (70%)					
				Excellent		Proficient		Needs Improvement	
Overall Student Growth Rating (30%)	Excellent	4.0	Excellent	3.3	Proficient	2.6	Proficient	1.9	Needs Improvement
	Proficient	3.7	Excellent	3.0	Proficient	2.3	Needs Improvement	1.6	Needs Improvement
	Needs Improvement	3.4	Proficient	2.7	Proficient	2.0	Needs Improvement	1.3	Unsatisfactory
	Unsatisfactory	3.1	Proficient	2.4	Needs Improvement	1.7	Needs Improvement	1.0	Unsatisfactory

Assigned Values (Growth + Practice Components)		Overall Summative Rankings	
4 = Excellent		3.5-4.0	Excellent
3 = Proficient		2.5-3.49	Proficient
2 = Needs Improvement		1.5-2.49	Needs Improvement
1 = Unsatisfactory		1.0-1.49	Unsatisfactory

Overall Summative Formula (Student Growth 30% + Teacher Practice (70%))

Student Growth Rating (1-4) x .3 + Teacher Practice Rating (1-4) x .7 = Overall Summative Rating

Example:

Teacher scores a proficient in student growth = 3

Teacher scores an excellent in teacher practice = 4

$$(3 \times .3) + (4 \times .7) = 3.7$$

3.7 = Excellent Overall summative rating

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What do you find to be noteworthy as you read the outcomes of the program evaluation teacher quality rating and student growth measured and their relationship?
2. What measures would you consider employing to address your findings you noted in question one?
3. How does the school district design a coherent framework for professional learning related to your noteworthy findings and their relationship to teacher quality ratings and student achievement?

Appendix D: MAP Math RIT Scores

NWEA MAP RIT Grade Level Expectations			# on level	% on level		# on level	% on level	% change BOY to EOY
Grade	BOY	EOY	BOY	BOY		EOY	EOY	
3rd	190	203	60/205	29%		40/199	20%	-9%
4th	202	214	40/204	20%		39/196	20%	0%
5th	211	221	40/208	19%		37/209	18%	-1%
6th	218	225	23/188	12%		35/188	19%	7%
7th	223	229	38/181	21%		50/188	27%	6%
8th	226	231	54/176	31%		60/175	34%	3%